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and  
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# COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Gortney named counselor for West Central Kentucky

Summer Gortney is the new outreach counselor for the West Central Kentucky region, which includes Allen, Barren, Bullitt, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Green, Hardin, LaRue, Meade, Metcalfe, Monroe, Nelson and Spencer counties. She was most recently the outreach services assistant and has been with KHEAA and The Student Loan People for three years.

Summer is a 2004 graduate of Georgetown College, where she earned a bachelor's in communications with a minor in kinesiology. At Georgetown, Summer was a member of the three-time conference champion Lady Tigers softball team. She is working on a master's in public administration at Kentucky State University. "College access is a vital resource to ensure success for Kentucky's future," Summer said. "I am proud to serve West Central Kentucky's college planning and financial aid needs as a representative of KHEAA and The Student Loan People."



## What eighth-graders need to know before ninth grade

As summer break draws near, it is time to start gearing up for Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) reporting. Although students do not actually earn awards until the end of their ninth-grade year, information such as name, address, Social Security number and birth date will be reported for students completing the eighth grade this year. KHEAA uses this information to mail KEES brochures to all students to introduce them to the program as they begin high school.

There are a few things that middle school counselors and administrators can do to help us with this information sharing process.

➤ ***Verify each eighth-grader's Social Security number and birth date.***

Social Security number and birth date are the two main identifiers that tell our database where to place information for students. Although eighth-grade records are the first information reported for many students, an incorrect SSN and/or birth date could cause problems when the student's high school records start coming in. Oddly enough, KHEAA finds more discrepancies on SSNs and birth dates between the eighth- and ninth-grade years than any other years.

If your student's SSNs have not been checked since they initially entered your school district, you may want to request they bring in proof, such as their Social Security card.

➤ ***Double-check mailing addresses for your students.***

Roughly 25,000 of the addresses reported for KEES each year are incorrect, resulting in a significant amount of returned mail. Over a third of that amount can be attributed to addresses reported for eighth-graders. KHEAA asks that you help us make sure these important letters reach the students they are intended for by checking students' mailing addresses before they leave the eighth grade.

If you have questions about KEES, feel free to contact our program coordinator, Sheila Hilderbrand at [shilderbrand@kheaa.com](mailto:shilderbrand@kheaa.com) or 800.928.8926, extension 7393.



## Money tips for students

### How to save money on cell phone bills

Many students have cell phones — and sometimes a huge bill that goes with it. A cell phone is convenient and nice to have in the event of an emergency. But you can quickly get in over your head.

Use your cell phone wisely. Fees, taxes, surcharges, activation fees, overage and roaming charges all add up. Get the bottom-line cost in writing for your first bill, with an itemized calculation of all costs, including taxes, activation fees and cost of the phone itself.

The best way to avoid a huge cell phone bill is a prepaid phone. Then you'll know exactly what you're spending and won't allow you to go over your minutes.

A cell phone contract is legally binding — and a contract written by a company is usually written to favor the company's bottom line, not yours. Make sure to read the fine print of any contract, but pay close attention to the one called "Terms and Conditions," which outlines what you are agreeing to abide by when you sign.

Look for a two-year contract commitment and pay attention to contract termination fees and a "free trial" period. You can review the service agreements of many cell phone companies on the Internet. Check them out and compare before you decide.

A phone upgrade fee may be charged when you buy a new phone from your existing carrier. Many retail outlets don't tell you about this fee. You find out about it on your first or second months' bill. It should be mentioned in your contract, so check it out before changing your phone. If you don't want to pay the phone upgrade fee, you can switch to another carrier, but you'll have to pay an early termination fee. Don't rely on oral promises about your contract or your bill. Get any promises or agreements in writing and file

them with your signed contract in case of a dispute.

It's handy to have a phone, but not if you're going broke staying in touch. Be conservative with your money by watching your minutes, tailoring your plan to your needs and reviewing any charges you haven't anticipated.

### Doug Cook works in 15 far western counties

As a way to get to know your outreach counselor, we are featuring Doug Cook in this edition of the *Counselor Connection*. Different counselors will be featured in future editions.



Doug works with students, parents and counselors in 15 far western Kentucky counties as an outreach counselor for KHEAA and The Student Loan People. The outreach program seeks to increase the state's college-going rate, tell Kentuckians about the advantages of continuing their education after high school and provide information about the agencies' services and financial aid programs.

**Counties:** Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Hickman, Graves, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Trigg, Union

**Years of Service:** 6

**Professional Goals:** To continue in the field of education

**Educational Background:** AAS, Business Administration; BS, Business Education; MA, Elementary Education; Rank 1 Supervision and Administration

**Dream Vacation:** Return to Hawaii

**Hobbies:** Reading, swimming and TV

**Personal Motto or Favorite Quote:** "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

**Personal Hero:** My father

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